

CLASSICAL RIVALRIES

THURSDAY, JULY 13 | 11 AM | THE ELMS

This concert is made possible through the generous support of **Robert H. Connell and Michelle Duffy.**

Lun Li, violin

Ariel Horowitz, violin

Edwin Kaplan, viola

Titilayo Ayangade, cello

Llewellyn Sanchez-Werner, piano

MOZART **String Quartet No. 14 in G Major, K. 387**

I. Allegro vivace assai

II. Menuetto. Allegro - Trio

III. Andante cantabile

IV. Molto allegro

(Approximate duration 30 minutes)

LISZT ***Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2, 5, 6***
(Approximate duration 26 minutes)

INTERMISSION

BRAHMS **Piano Quartet No. 1 in G minor, Op. 25**

I. Allegro

II. Intermezzo. Allegro, ma non troppo - Trio. Animato

III. Andante con moto

IV. Rondo alla zingarese. Presto

(Approximate duration 40 minutes)

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791):
String Quartet in G Major, No. 14, K. 387

One of Mozart's most earthshaking developments musically upon his move from his native Salzburg to Vienna in 1781 was meeting Joseph Haydn for the first time and hearing the older composer's Opus 33 Quartets. The profound influence of these works on the younger composer resulted in his composing six quartets. He dedicated these "fruits of a long and arduous labor" to his esteemed friend, and on that occasion in 1785 when Haydn had heard Wolfgang, his father Leopold, and two friends play these quartets, Haydn had told Leopold: "I tell you before God as an honest man that your son is the greatest composer known to me either in person or by reputation. He has taste, and what is more, the most profound knowledge of composition."

Haydn's Opus 33 Quartets, which he himself had said were written "in an entirely new manner," influenced Mozart particularly in their new equality of part-writing for the four individual instruments and their treatment of thematic elaboration as an integral part of a whole work

rather than belonging only to traditional development sections. Mozart's *Haydn* Quartets show these elements in abundance along with his own inspired brand of grace and inventiveness.

Mozart completed the G Major Quartet, K. 387, the first of the *Haydn* Quartets, on December 31, 1782. The stunning variety of the four movements and their combined effusive optimism have made this perhaps the most popular quartet of the six. The first movement revels in contrasts, soft and loud, determined and tender, ascending and descending, diatonic and chromatic. The opening gesture's forthrightness followed by its gentle tag immediately demonstrates this, as does the contrast between the entire first theme and the gently marching second theme with its repeated notes. Not only is the development remarkable for Mozart's ingenious spinning out of these ideas, but the recapitulation delights in further elaboration.

The Menuetto takes dynamic contrast to a new level of detail when, following two graceful downward leaps, his chromatic lines alternate soft and loud with every note. As a counterbalance Mozart introduces a second theme, as part of this section's miniature sonata form, now featuring repeated notes followed by chromatic descents. Drama explodes in the trio in minor-key unison where one might often find more pastoral repose. By now we expect dynamic contrast, which certainly abounds in the slow movement, though with a preponderance of quiet that is especially striking at the close of the first phrase. What becomes more salient as the movement unfolds is the contrast in textures between slow-moving lines and the fast notes of Mozart's filigree, which is not always confined to the first violin part. A striking harmonic surprise prepares the second theme of this slow-movement sonata form (that is, exposition and recapitulation without a development section). In the recap's brief delicate extension, Mozart emphasizes the triplet motion that had made an appearance toward the end of the first theme and become a defining feature of the second.

The last movement gives us a wonderful preview of the composer's crowning Jupiter Symphony, both in its four-note theme and in its imitative treatment. The miracle of Mozart's fugal style here comes in the ease with which he switches back and forth between contrapuntal and homophonic texture (melody and accompaniment). These effortless shifts of style correspond to structural divisions in which the fugal texture presents the main thematic material of sonata form, and the homophonic texture the transitional and cadential material. Mozart takes his leave with a nice Haydnesque touch—forceful, seemingly conclusive chords that then give way to the quiet “true” ending.

Franz Liszt (1811-1886): Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2, 5, 6

Franz Liszt was a most unusual Hungarian patriot. Though born in Hungary, he was raised in the French language, moved with his family to Vienna at the age of ten, and visited his homeland only infrequently thereafter. Yet he maintained an interest in Hungarian music throughout his life and wrote numerous works incorporating national melodies: the 19 Hungarian Rhapsodies and several other pieces for solo piano (six of the Rhapsodies were later transcribed for orchestra), a symphonic poem, a Mass written for the coronation of Emperor Franz Josef as King of Hungary in 1867, and the Hungarian Fantasy for piano and orchestra. Liszt was convinced that he was immortalizing the true folk music of his native country in these compositions, among the earliest works of the “nationalism” movement that gained such importance during following decades.

Liszt's rhapsodies remain excellent examples of his art and atmospheric souvenirs of a particularly colorful kind of music. Hanspeter Krellmann summarized the stylistic features of the Gypsy music that Liszt employed: “the so-called harmonic minor scale, with an interval of a fourth augmented by a semitone to form a tritone, the abrupt harmonic transitions which bypass the classical rules of modulation, the loose treatment of rhythms leading to syncopation and to

grace-notes before and after the beat, the instrumental delights emanating from the special sound of the cimbalom strings, and finally the performing style making free use of rubato and accelerando and yielding a degree of expressiveness almost unknown before that time." Many of these works were built around the performance method of the Hungarian national dance, the Czardas, which alternates (at a sign from the dancer to the orchestra) between a slow movement — "Lassu"—and a fast one— "Friss." To describe their resultant free structure and quick contrasts, Liszt borrowed the term "Rhapsody" from literature, saying that it was meant to indicate the "fantastic, epic quality" of this music. He may have been the first to use this title in a musical context, just as he had introduced the word "recital" to describe his solo concerts of the 1840s.

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897): Piano Quartet No. 1 in G minor, Op. 25

One of Brahms's idiosyncrasies as a composer was his tendency to produce works in pairs. In each instance, the pair constituted either Brahms's only works in the form or medium, or his initial ventures. Apparently, the problems entailed in breaking new ground stimulated his imagination to the point that it produced enough material for two compositions. In 1861-62, Brahms composed two piano quartets - in G minor, Opus 25, and in A Major, Opus 26 - while he was still living in his home city of Hamburg. In his late 20s, he was in the process of learning his trade, and he still felt most comfortable with chamber music groupings involving his own instrument, the piano.

The G minor Quartet received its first performance in Hamburg in November 1861, with Brahms's friend Clara Schumann playing the piano part. Hamburg was then a cultural backwater, and the work received little attention elsewhere. A year later, however, the quartet was instrumental in what was perhaps Brahms's most important career decision. In September 1862, Brahms visited Vienna to assess the advisability of his moving permanently to the music capital of Europe. He showed the two piano quartets to Josef Hellmesberger, head of Vienna's leading string quartet, who arranged public performances of the works with Brahms at the piano. The resulting favorable reception helped persuade Brahms to make the jump from Hamburg to Vienna the following year.

The G minor Quartet is one of Brahms's most infectious compositions, combining the exuberance and vigor of youth with a growing mastery of form and thematic development. The first movement has no less than eight themes, some in the tonic G minor and some in contrasting D Major and D minor, but all linked by a complex web of shared motives and rhythmic elements. After the themes are presented, Brahms restates the opening theme in a new dress, as a dialogue between the piano and strings. With so much material, Brahms avoids diffuseness by focusing the development on the opening theme. Perhaps the most inventive passage comes in the recapitulation when a particularly vigorous theme, heard initially in a joyful D Major, is now repeated in a somber G minor. The movement is then played out in the minor mode, giving the music an overall tragic cast.

The second movement bears the title "Intermezzo," the first time Brahms used that term. Organized like a scherzo with a main section, a trio and the main section repeated, the music is played with mutes and in a flowing 9/8 rhythm. The result is the first of those "sweet-sad" interludes that Brahms was often to use as a respite between weightier movements.

The slow movement is one of startling contrasts. After a long-relaxed opening in E flat, there is a sudden change of mood, and we are caught up in a rhythmic march (though in triple meter) in C Major. The march, first played *pianissimo*, rises to a stirring climax *fortissimo*. The first section

returns in the secondary key, and when it regains its original key, it is so changed in texture that there is no sense of anticlimax.

Brahms titled the fourth movement *Rondo alla Zingarese* or “Gypsy Rondo” in the mistaken belief that he had written in an authentic Hungarian folk style. In 1853, he had toured Europe as piano accompanist for Eduard Remenyi, a Hungarian violinist, and had developed an affection for what he thought was Hungarian music. What he had heard, however, was a popularized version of Hungarian music then being offered by traveling gypsy bands without roots in Magyar musical tradition.

As a result, Brahms, like Liszt and other composers, confused gypsy music with true Hungarian music, and erroneously used the terms “Hungarian” and “gypsy” interchangeably. It was not until early in the 20th century that Bartók and Kodály, based on field research, documented the substantial differences between the gypsy style favored by Brahms and the authentic Magyar idiom.

For sheer excitement, the “Gypsy Rondo” has few equals in chamber music. Following the gypsy convention, the movement consists of a feverish sequence of separate sections, in contrasting rhythms and moods. There is then a cadenza in which the four instruments rhapsodize over the melodies. The work ends with a headlong rush, marked by the composer *molto presto*, the only such designation in the chamber-music repertory.

Festival Artist Biographies can be found on page 124.